Geo-tagging of price control magistrates ordered

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Amir Khattak has directed the district administrations of Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum and Murree to start geo-tagging of price control magistrates to ensure transparency of their field activities.

He stated this while reviewing the performance of price control magistrates at a meeting attended by the deputy commissioners of Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum and Murree, ADCs, assistant commissioners, price control magistrates and officials of concerned departments.

The commissioner instructed the officers to further accelerate public-interest measures, continue indiscriminate action against profiteering and hoarding, and ensure effective monitoring in the field.

The commissioner was briefed on the daily performance of the price control magistrates. The briefing showed that during the last 24 hours, 6,268 inspections were conducted across the Rawalpindi division, resulting in 510 violations being reported. Fines amounting to Rs511,000 were imposed, 11 premises were sealed and nine individuals arrested.

In the district of Rawalpindi, 2,871 inspections led to the detection of 43 violations, imposition of Rs296,000 fines, and eight premises sealed. In Attock, 1,493 inspections resulted detection of 278 violations, fines of Rs168,500, two premises being sealed, and nine FIRs registered. In Jhelum, 52 violations were found, fines of Rs15,500 were imposed and two premises were sealed.

In Chakwal, fines of Rs19,000 were imposed on violators. In Murree, 566 inspections were conducted during which 101 violations were found and fines of Rs12,009 were imposed.

Taxila, Attock bars elect new office-bearers

TAXILA: The legal fraternity of Taxila, Attock and other tehsils elected their new office-bearers for 2026-27.

In Taxila, the PLF sweeps the polls by electing Malik Sajjad Hussain as president, Usman Umer as vice president, Ali Nawaz as general secretary, Ali Abbas as joint secretary, Saqib Javaid as finance secretary and Qadeer Hussain as library secretary.

In Attock, district bar association, the slots of president and vice president were won by candidates of the Shaheed Malik Israr Advocate Group. Rab Nawaz Hayat Bilal Advocate was elected president, while Malik Shoaib and Sheikh Mohammad Tayyab Advocate secured victory in the contest for joint secretary.

According to the Election Commission, a total of 32 votes were declared invalid.

Syed Aqdas Hussain Shah was elected President of the Hassanabdal Bar Association, Syeda Farhat Jabeen as Vice President and Naila Kausar as General Secretary.

Malik Tahir Naveed Advocate was elected President of the Pindigheb Bar Association. The contest for the office of General Secretary ended in a tie with both Sohail Abbas and Bilal Mustafa securing 46 votes each. As one vote was declared sealed, the final decision regarding the general secretary's post will be made by the Punjab Bar Council after ruling on the sealed vote.

Aamna Batool was elected vice president and Rahat Abbas was elected as Joint Secretary, and Saqlain Shah was elected finance secretary.

In Fatehjang, Sardar Sajjad Haider Khan was elected president, Malik Abdul Rehman general secretary, Asma Mehboob Vice President, while Rehana Sumbal was elected as Joint Secretary. In Jand, Malik Abrar Khan was elected as president and Malik Shahryar Javed as general secretary of the bar association. — Correspondent

Minister seeks changes to Pharmacy Act

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal on Sunday said the Pharmacy Act 1967, along with the pharmacy curriculum, should be restructured in line with international standards.

"Pharmacy graduates should be trained to effectively meet both national and international healthcare needs, ensuring the quality of medicines, patient safety and professional competence," he said after getting a briefing by the director general (health) and the director of pharmacy services, Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap).

The minister directed the constitution of a technical committee to review the existing legal framework and propose amendments to the Pharmacy Act 1967.

Furthermore, he instructed the president of the Pharmacy Council (DG health) to fully digitise all functions of the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan to enhance transparency, efficiency and institutional effectiveness.

Reaffirming the importance of pharmacists, the minister stated that pharmacists were a vital component of the healthcare system and reiterated the government's strong commitment to strengthening and improving pharmacy services across the country.
— Staff Reporter

THE ill-fated house that was destroyed following the gas cylinder explosion in Islamabad's G-7 area on Sunday. — Photo by Mohammad Asim

'Everything had gone': the day a father's joy turned to grief

What began as a wedding celebration for Hanif Masih ended in tragedy when a gas blast in G-7 sector destroyed his family

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: Hanif Masih, a man in his mid-50s and father of groom Sharoon Hanif, was jubilant just a day earlier when celebrations returned to his home after almost two years, following the marriage of his elder son.

However, he was unaware that the wedding ceremony of his younger son would bring lifelong pain and grief, costing him almost all his close relatives.

An explosion reportedly caused by gas leakage killed at least eight people, including four of Mr Masih immediate family members, in Sector G-7 of the federal capital and left several others injured on Sunday morning.

THE newly-married couple who died in the blast. — White Star

Talking to media persons, Hanif said he was in a room constructed adjacent to the house, while all other family members were inside the main house.

"At around 7:15am, I heard a blast. I rushed towards the house and saw that everything had been destroyed. A large number of guests were already present because of my son's marriage ceremony. Due to the blast, I have lost many relatives, including my newly-wed son, his wife, my wife and my other daughter-in-law, while my daughter has been seriously injured," he said.

Replying to a question, he said that since the guests had remained awake until around 3am, most of them were sleeping at the time of the incident.

Sohail Romi, who was present at the site of the incident, told Dawn that both the bride and groom were his relatives.

"The baraat had arrived from Gujrat on Saturday night at 66 Quarters in G-7/2, Islamabad, and the walima reception was scheduled for Sunday noon. To my knowledge, the gas remained open during the night, and in the morning someone lit a matchstick, which caused the gas to catch fire and led to the explosion," he said.

Mr Romi, who is also the General Secretary of the PPP Minority Wing Rawalpindi, said the bride's family had already booked a bus from Gujrat to attend the walima and had planned to take the bride with them for a few days.

"However, after receiving the tragic news, they delayed their departure from Gujrat and reached Islamabad by 3pm in the same bus. It was decided to bury six bodies on Sunday at the Christian graveyard in Sector H-8. The remaining two bodies were to be buried on Monday [today]," he said.

William Pervez, a resident of the area, told Dawn that the worst affected was Yaqoob Masih, a resident of a neighbouring house, who lost his two sons.

"Yaqoob was out of the city. His two sons were sleeping in their house when the roof suddenly collapsed due to the blast, killing both on the spot. It was decided that the burial of Yaqoob's two sons would be held on Monday [today]," he said.

CDA orders citywide fire safety survey after blast

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of a gas cylinder blast that claimed eight lives and injured 11 others in Islamabad, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to conduct a survey of fire safety and emergency response measures in all residential and commercial buildings across the federal capital within one month.

CDA Chairman Mohammad Ali Randhawa directed that fire safety and emergency response measures be surveyed in all residential and commercial properties in Islamabad, says a press release issued on Sunday.

At least eight people, including the groom, bride and the groom's mother, lost their lives in the gas cylinder explosion in the G-7 informal settlements.

The press release stated that notices are being issued to owners of all private and public residential and commercial properties, while the inspection process of these buildings has also been initiated.

The CDA chairman said emergency exits must be ensured in every residential and commercial building in case of fire or short circuits.

"In this context, owners of private buildings should develop emergency exit plans through consultants, while emergency exit plans for public buildings should be prepared in consultation with the CDA," the press release said.

Mr Randhawa directed that the survey of all private and public buildings be completed and a report submitted within one month. He added that the elevation of buildings declared sensitive would be carried out.

Following his directive, the press release said, the Building Control Directorate has formed teams. "These teams will immediately complete the survey of sensitive buildings and submit their reports to the concerned officers. The purpose of these measures is to prevent loss of life in case of any unfortunate incident, particularly fire."

Meanwhile, the CDA chief expressed profound grief and sorrow over the gas cylinder explosion in Sector G-7/2 and visited the accident site to review details of the incident.

Accompanied by relevant officers, he also visited the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) Hospital to inquire about the condition of the injured and directed the hospital administration to provide the best possible medical facilities.

The CDA chairman said that the rescue operation had been completed and that the explosion occurred due to a gas leak.

He said such incidents often occur during winter due to the careless use of gas cylinders. He assured that the affected families would be provided assistance and said a transparent inquiry into the incident had been initiated.

According to the CDA, upon receiving information about the incident, the Capital Emergency Service immediately launched an emergency operation and reached the site within five minutes, enabling timely rescue and medical assistance.

The service mobilised all its resources, deploying firefighting, rescue and medical units. As many as 45 medical and rescue personnel participated in the operation, supported by 10 ambulances and one rescue vehicle.

Governor terms laptop a must for govt school students

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has stated that every student from grade 9 to 12 enrolled in government schools in Attock should own a laptop to equip themselves with information technology (IT) skills.

He was speaking at a laptop distribution ceremony in Jand town of Attock on Sunday, where an NGO provided 1,000 laptops in the first phase, which will be distributed among students across all six tehsils of Attock.

The governor said strengthening public sector education remains a top priority. "If the government school system improves, private schools will automatically lose their appeal," he remarked.

Regarding health initiatives, the governor announced that a dialysis centre with five machines would soon become operational at the government hospital in Jand. He also announced that a mother and child health centre, in collaboration with the Punjab Red Crescent, would be launched shortly at Jand hospital.

Additionally, he said a dialysis centre named after Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had already been established in Fatehjang.

Highlighting social welfare measures, the governor pledged support for the marriages of underprivileged girls.

"On the 24th of this month, we are arranging mass marriages for 35 couples belonging to the less privileged segments of society, including nine from Jand tehsil," he said, adding that full dowry arrangements would be provided, and meals for 1,500 to 2,000 guests would be sponsored at his own expense.

He also announced the solarisation of six schools in the district. The governor thanked individuals and organisations that supported the provision of laptops and solar energy initiatives for schools.

Regarding development measures undertaken during his tenure, the governor said electric bus services had been launched in Fatehjang and Hassanabdal to aid commuters.

He added that a passport office had been established in Hazro for public convenience, and water supply and other basic amenities were provided in the remote villages of Fatehjang, Pindigheb, and Jand.

He mentioned that with the cooperation of a public organisation an 18-kilometre road from Mari to Jalwal had been constructed, along with the establishment of dialysis centres and blood banks in Pindigheb and Fatehjang.

He announced that a dialysis centre would also be established at THQ Jand in the near future, equipped with five modern machines. Further, within the next one to one-and-a-half months, a fully equipped mother and child care centre would be established in Jand, staffed with a specialist female doctor.

On this occasion, he announced the creation of a special education cell at the Governor's House for Attock schools to ensure the provision of advanced facilities, and said solar panels would also be installed in schools. Later, the governor distributed laptops among male and female students of various government schools in Jand.

Biting cold grips Rawalpindi, Islamabad

Temperature drops to zero degree in twin cities

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: A biting cold has gripped the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, and Sunday was the coldest day of the current winter season with the temperature dropping to zero degree Celsius.

Usually, temperatures drop to minus degree Celsius in the twin cities in December and January, but this year it remained between 1 and 2 degrees. However, Sunday was the coldest day recorded so far in the current season by Pakistan Meteorological Department.

The coldest ever day in Islamabad was recorded on December 15, 1984, when the temperature dropped to -4.3 degrees.

"It was the coldest day of this winter season as temperature dropped to zero degree Celsius on January 11," said the forecasting officer at Met Office while talking to Dawn.

She said that the temperature was likely to rise in the next 24 hours due to clouds and fog. Frost and fog are likely to grip the twin cities in different patches.

She said there were no chances of further cold wave from the north, adding the intensity of the cold would decrease in coming week.

"Continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country, whereas a shallow westerly wave is likely to prevail over western and upper parts of the country on Monday," she said.

The official said mainly cold and dry weather was expected over most parts of the country, while very cold in hilly areas. However, she said partly cloudy weather was expected in upper parts with chances of light rain/light snow in Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and adjoining areas.

"Moderate to dense fog is likely to persist over Punjab, upper Sindh and plain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Frost may occur at isolated places in Potohar region and Kashmir during morning hours," she said.

The Met Office recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Skardu -14 degrees - Leh -13, Astore -11, Gupis -09, Gilgit -08, Ziarat, Qalat -07, Kalam, Hunza -06, Dera, Rawalakot and Parachinar -04 degree Celsius.

Meanwhile, the residents faced problems due to low gas pressure in many parts of the garrison city. Many people were using gas compressors adding to hardships others.

Due to the biting cold, children and elderly people are getting fever and other cold ailments.

Meanwhile, the number of people complaining of cold-related ailments has also shot up in the last few days. Doctors say most of the patients were children and elderly persons.

According to doctors, people should increase intake of liquid, especially soup and cover their heads and ears to beat the cold. On the other hand, the cold wave has increased the sale of winter dishes and other edibles.

However, unlike the past years when stalls of traditional food items at Bhabara Bazaar, Saddar and Commercial Market pulled crowds, no such rush has been seen in these areas due to high prices.